

# Our Story 2005

A N N U A L R E P O R T



MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION *for*  
**Volunteer Service**

*Making Volunteerism Work.*

*"2005 was an extraordinary year: it was a tight budget year,  
we saw the creation of volunteer centers, and then the  
devastation of Hurricane Katrina and the volunteer heroes that  
stepped forward and began to make things right. Pulling  
together for the common good...that's what makes us so special,  
and this is the power of the human spirit."*

**Marsha Meeks Kelly**

*Executive Director,  
Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service*



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## C H A P T E R

## 1

*Why What We Do Matters*

The mission of your state office of volunteerism – the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service (MCVS) – is “to engage and support Mississippians of all ages and backgrounds in service to their communities.” It’s a mission that guides everything we do, creating a common theme throughout the chapters of our story. We invest time, money, and human resources in programs like AmeriCorps, Learn & Serve America, YES! (Youth Engaged in Service), disability studies, and volunteer centers.

**Behind all our work is a vision of a stronger Mississippi – our programs focus on promoting education, improving housing, strengthening communities, meeting health and human needs, and developing youth leaders.**

We believe that including volunteers of all ages, abilities, faiths, races, and skill levels creates a powerful force for community improvement, whose efforts make the most of limited resources. We help people become more involved citizens in their own hometowns by getting the word out when funds are available, nurturing volunteer centers, offering high quality training events, and by publicly celebrating the achievements of volunteers.



**What we do matters... because the spirit of service begins at a young age and sparks the fire that burns throughout the life of a servant-leader.**



## C H A P T E R

## 2

*A Few Fast Facts*

The Mississippi Hurricane Recovery Hotline processed over 177,860 calls, staffed by 570 volunteers and AmeriCorps members who gave a total of 17,552 hours. Phone volunteers processed over 6,000 credit card donations to the Mississippi Hurricane Recovery Fund. In partnership with the Points of Light Foundation, MCVS premiered [www.1-800-VOLUNTEER.org](http://www.1-800-VOLUNTEER.org), and so far, 950+ people have registered online to pledge their support.

To thank ordinary heroes, the Commission coordinates the Governor's Initiative for Volunteer Excellence (GIVE) Awards. Last year we gave 10 GIVE Awards to individuals and organizations for outstanding volunteerism.

**We've done some impressive things in 2005.**

In 2005, our Youth Engaged in Service (YES!) leadership program had 25 members who did 10 service projects, including adopting a family on the Gulf Coast.

Mississippi's AmeriCorps programs engaged almost 700 Mississippians in national service who earned \$1.76 million worth of scholarships for school or student loans.

Our 8-member Volunteer Center network will double to 15 in 2006. Each Center receives training, a VISTA member, a computer with Internet, and access to the [www.1-800-VOLUNTEER.org](http://www.1-800-VOLUNTEER.org) system.

2005 Make A Difference Day participants collected 14,918 cans of beef stew – 31,888 eight-ounce adult servings! The cans were donated to Hurricane Katrina relief efforts across the state.



**YES! members engage in community projects  
throughout their year of service.**



## CHAPTER

## 3

*The AmeriCorps Story*

AmeriCorps programs provide opportunities for Americans to make an intensive commitment to service. During the 2004-2005 program year, 681 members served in 10 AmeriCorps programs: America Reads-Mississippi, the Algebra Project, Meridian Housing Authority (AmeriCorps Rebuilds Mississippi), Boys & Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast (AmeriCorps Takes ACTION), Campus Link/USM, Delta Reads Partnership, Jumpstart Mississippi, Mississippi Early Literacy Corps/MSU, Corinth Public Schools (Project FOCUS), and Living Independence For Everyone (LIFE)'s Project LINC.

**Since 1994, more than 10,000 Mississippians have earned an AmeriCorps education award, totaling at least \$45.7 million.**

In 2005, 459 AmeriCorps members completed their service and earned \$1,757,212 in education awards. They tutored 7,558 students, mentored 1,964 at-or high-risk youth, and planned service projects that engaged 19,083 volunteers in school-related activities. They also held 13 Study Circles, 6 College Opportunity Days for 214 middle school-students and their parents, and created Junior Citizen Corps Clubs for 1,020 students pre-K through 7th grade.

Members also provided independent living assistance to 500 people, helped 30 individuals with disabilities transition from assisted living to independent living, rehabilitated or removed 163 low income housing units benefiting 560 people, rehabilitated 238 homes, weatherized another three homes, participated in two Habitat for Humanity home builds, and helped 56 people complete home ownership training.



**Our AmeriCorps membership is a melting pot of faiths,  
genders, creeds, races, and abilities.**



## CHAPTER

## 4

*Learn & Serve and YES! Successes*

The Commission is bringing learning to life for Mississippi youth through service-learning, a teaching method that enriches learning by engaging students in meaningful service. Youth apply academic skills to tackling real-world challenges, linking learning objectives with genuine needs. Students lead the process, with adults as partners, applying critical thinking and problem solving skills to issues in their own communities. Our programs in 2005 were DREAM of Hattiesburg and Family Network Partnership in Hattiesburg, Voice of Calvary Ministries in Jackson, and Quitman County Development Organization in Marks.

**"Service-learning is education in action."  
— Senator John Glenn**

The 2005 class of Mississippi Youth Engaged in Service (YES!) enlisted, trained, and empowered high school students to be service leaders in their schools and communities. Twenty-five YES! members dedicated this year to advocating for and supporting people with disabilities, collecting and delivering school supplies and backpacks to elementary school students impacted by Hurricane Katrina, adopting a Moss Point family whose home was severely damaged by the hurricane, and interviewing Coastal residents to document stories of hope and courage.



**Service-learning engages students in meaningful service that supports the school curriculum,  
building a bridge between academics and life beyond.**



## CHAPTER

## 5

*The Volunteer Center Network*

Since March, MCVS has developed eight volunteer centers and connected them to the Points of Light Foundation and Volunteer Center National Network. Seven more (total 15 Volunteer Centers) are coming, all using [www.1-800-VOLUNTEER.org](http://www.1-800-VOLUNTEER.org) as the central database of volunteer opportunities and technical infrastructure to recruit, manage, and track volunteer activity.

**MCVS was awarded an AmeriCorps\*VISTA project to recruit and place up to 44 VISTA members statewide to aid in the Katrina recovery efforts.**

AmeriCorps\*VISTAs will be placed at the Mississippi Hurricane Recovery Call Center to manage the 1-800-VOLUNTEER.org system, place volunteers where they are needed, and update resources and donations available. VISTA members will also be placed with each of the 15 Volunteer Centers to provide training and technical assistance to the start-up team. Next, MCVS will utilize Mississippi's system of higher education to assist with disaster relief. Up to 15 AmeriCorps\*VISTAs will be placed on college and university campuses, who will be coordinated through the Mississippi Center for Community and Civic Engagement at USM. Finally, up to 10 VISTA members will be placed with organizations to help meet hurricane recovery needs as they arise over the next several years.



**The Commission's advisors include the brightest and best minds in Mississippi's volunteer sector.**



## C H A P T E R

## 6

*Mississippi Hurricane Recovery Hotline*

The Mississippi Hurricane Recovery Hotline, or “Call Center,” was created at the request of Governor Haley Barbour as an initial response to Hurricane Katrina. The original purpose of the Call Center was to accept the donation of fiscal and tangible assets and to provide hurricane relief information to the Mississippians affected by the storm. The Call Center was managed by MCVS personnel and staffed by both AmeriCorps teams and traditional volunteers from around the nation, over 570 volunteers contributed more than 17,552 volunteer hours. The Call Center fielded 177,860 incoming and outgoing phone calls from September to December 2005.

**More than 570 volunteers fielded an estimated 177,860 calls between September and December, giving over 17,552 hours of volunteer time.**

The Call Center evolved over time to incorporate four departments: Phone Bank, Matching, Volunteers, and Adoption. The Phone Bank’s primary purpose became the fielding of requests for assistance phone calls. Phone Bank operators gathered as much accurate, useful information relating to hurricane relief as possible and disseminated that information to callers.

The Matching Team coordinated tangible goods donations made to the State. They were responsible for soliciting goods from individuals and corporations, for arranging for donated transportation, and for identifying needs in affected counties.

The Volunteer Team worked closely with The Points of Light Foundation’s [www.1-800-VOLUNTEER.org](http://www.1-800-VOLUNTEER.org) online database to organize people who wanted to volunteer on the coast and organizations on the coast that were accepting volunteers. The Team identified 90+ organizations that had requested volunteers and through December brought down nearly 1,500 volunteers to work.

The Adoption Program worked with coastal cities, schools, churches, and families, linking those groups with similar groups across the nation. Through this department, dozens of families and organizations that would have otherwise slipped through administrative cracks in the recovery system were able to receive aid.

The four departments together addressed thousands of requests for assistance, served hundreds of families, businesses, and non-profit organizations all over the state, and accepted hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of fiscal and tangible donations for the State.





*The HOPE mosaic was created by residents of Pass Christian from the remnants of their fallen homes.*





### *Ongoing Hurricane Recovery Efforts*

*Though the separate Call Center closed on December 16, 2005, the work of hurricane recovery for MCVS is far from over. Through the [www.1-800-VOLUNTEER.org](http://www.1-800-VOLUNTEER.org) database, volunteer coordination for the coast will continue. Since the best place to facilitate disaster relief is on the ground at the disaster-affected area, the MCVS Special Projects Coordinator is scheduled to begin work on the Mississippi Gulf Coast in January 2006. The Commission's disaster relief responsibilities:*



- To continue to bring volunteers to the coast to support the reconstruction effort. The Special Projects Coordinator has been assigned direct supervision of two AmeriCorps\*VISTA members. Once selected, they will be trained in the use of the [www.1-800-VOLUNTEER.org](http://www.1-800-VOLUNTEER.org) database and tasked to facilitate the influx of volunteers for disaster relief and recovery.



- To leverage the resources of MCVS and its affiliates, including other national service programs, towards the recovery effort. The Special Projects Coordinator is to broker relationships, record volunteer activity for evaluation, and help create networks of volunteer activity in hurricane-affected areas.



- To devise and replicate innovative, efficient methods of utilizing volunteers for the rebuilding effort. To this end, MCVS has requisitioned an AmeriCorps NCCC team from Charleston to work on the coast from January 13 through February 23, 2006. This team will be based out of the AmeriCorps St. Louis Emergency Response Team's "Tent City" in Pass Christian, assist in the daily activities of volunteer facilitation and administration at Tent City, and observe and document the process by which Tent City began and by which it now operates. At the end of the NCCC team's assignment in Pass Christian, there will be a written instructions for a detailed method by which a city could deploy AmeriCorps members and traditional volunteers to effectively assist in the rebuilding process.

- To catalogue volunteer efforts and organizations working in disaster relief. The Special Projects Coordinator will record volunteer organizations' activities for disaster relief and assist them in understanding Mississippi's needs.



## CHAPTER

## 7

*Training For The Future*

The overall goal of MCVS' training and technical assistance component is to improve the quality and the impact of national service programs in Mississippi by providing effective training events; providing or facilitating practical, usable technical assistance; and utilizing state-of-the-art technology and other media to share opportunities, resources, and best practices.

**MCVS sponsored 10 trainings for 1,800 people, improving the quality and impact of our national service programs.**

2005's impressive training agenda included the "I Will Get Things Done For America" National Service Orientation Conference; Leadership Plenty Parts II and III; Financial Training for AmeriCorps program directors and staff; a technical assistance training for potential AmeriCorps applicants; Mississippi's Youth Service Summit; "Blasting Stress And Burnout: Recognition, Prevention, and Intervention" for AmeriCorps program directors and staff; an MCVS staff training on CPR and First Aid; "Reinventing Mississippi: The Conference For Nonprofits And Volunteers" (the first-ever joint conference with the Mississippi Center For Nonprofits); the AmeriCorps Celebration of Service; and a Program and Fiscal Management Training.



**Collaborations with other government agencies and nonprofit organizations allows us to train more effectively, at less cost.**



## C H A P T E R

## 8

*Disability Inclusion in Mississippi*

According to the U. S. Census Report, 23.6% of Mississippians have disabilities. MCVS realizes that people with disabilities want to be connected and provide services to their communities; outreach is a very important element in implementing these opportunities. MCVS is educating Mississippians and building opportunities by recruiting and encouraging placement of people with disabilities in national and community service programs. By implementing retraining programs or providing reasonable accommodation in the workplace, disability ratings can be significantly reduced. It is our goal to enlarge the scope of awareness in order to educate communities and increase the involvement of volunteers across the state.

**In 2004-2005, MCVS had 20 AmeriCorps members... with disabilities.**

For the 2004-2005 grant year MCVS had 20 AmeriCorps members who were reported as individuals with disabilities.. Although the percentage is small, the impact of national service among our disability population is growing. As we provide more and more awareness, we will begin to see greater changes.



**Giving back is a common goal. By thinking outside the box, we help create programs that allow a wide range of people to participate in national and community service.**



## C H A P T E R

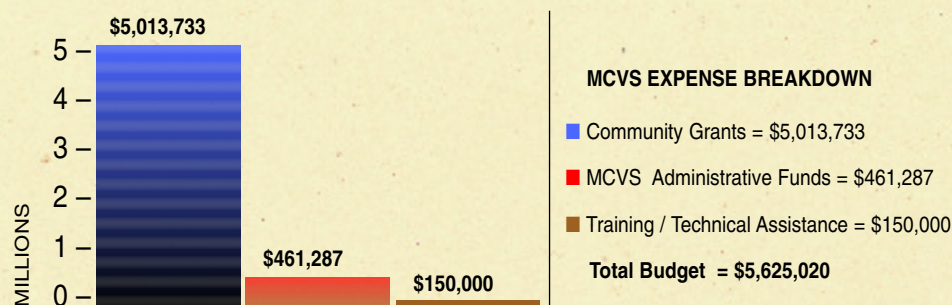
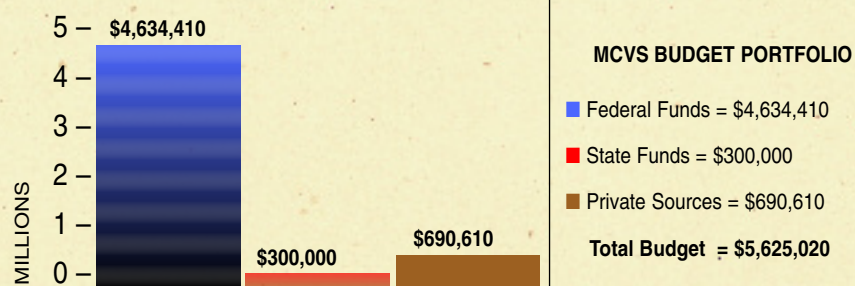
## 9

*The Financial Picture*

Budget Portfolio: For Fiscal Year 2005 (beginning July 01, 2004) MCVS estimates a total budget of \$5,625,020 made up of \$4,634,410 in federal funds, \$300,000 in state funds, and \$690,610 in private funds.

For each **\$1** the legislature appropriated in Fiscal Year 2005,  
MCVS leveraged **\$18** from non-state sources.

Expense Breakdown: During Fiscal Year 2005, \$5,013,733 flowed through to benefit Mississippi communities through grants. An additional \$150,000 provided training and technical assistance for national service programs and participants. Only \$461,287 or 8% of the total budget was spent for MCVS administration.



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Thank you to Mississippi's Congressional  
 and Legislative offices and the Corporation  
 for National and Community Service  
 for 11 years of support.

## Our Mission

To engage and support Mississippians  
 of all ages and backgrounds in service  
 to their communities.

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